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By MURRAY CHASS Special to The New York Times

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KANSAS CITY, Mo., Oct. 6 — Ron Guidry, figuring he is the Yankee pitcher with the best chance to “blow these guys away,” will start the opening game of the American League play-off against the Kansas City Royals Wednesday night.

Manager Dick Howser announced his “tough” decision after meeting with the pitching staff before a one-hour workout at Royals Stadium tonight. He said Rudy May, Tommy John and Luis Tiant would start the following three games. Jim Frey, the Royal manager, announced previously that his starters would be, in order, Larry Gura, Dennis Leonard, Paul Splittorff and Rich Gale.

Howser also said Graig Nettles had received medical clearance to play and would start the second game against the right-handed Leonard, a 20-game winner. Aurelio Rodriguez will play third base in the opener against the left-handed Gura.

Guidry will be starting a playoff opener for the first time, even though

he started three times in the Yankees’ previous playoff encounters with the Royals. He beat the Royals with a three-hitter in the second game of the 1977 series and won the fourth and final game in 1978. In all his postseason appearances, including the World Series, the 30-year-old left-hander has a 4-0 record and a 2.17 earned-run average.

On Top Since Sept. 16

He received the assignment after emerging from the bull pen Sept. 16 and winning all four starts since then.

“I believe that once I got back in the starting rotation, the manager more or less geared it around me opening the thing,” said Guidry, who finished the season with a 17-10 record and a 3.56 e.r.a. “I think he’s going on the assumption that if anyone can blow these guys away, I have the best chance at it. If we can blow them away in the first game here, it would take some steam out of them.”

Howser said that Guidry, May and John all deserved a chance to start. “May led the league in earned-run

average,” he said, “Tommy John is a prime contender for the Cy Young Award and Guidry’s been great. It was a tough decision to make. It’s not fair, but only one can do it.”

Although John, a 22-game winner, had been considered the leading candidate to start the opener, more recent speculation was that Howser would hold him until play moved to Yankee Stadium, because ground-ball pitchers like him usually have more success on a grass field than on artificial turf.

John Points to His Record

John scoffed at that idea and pointed to his two playoff victories in Philadelphia, when he pitched for the Los Angeles Dodgers. Nevertheless, in the last three years, during which he has won 60 games and lost 28, his record on artificial turf is 7-6, with a 4.81 e.r.a. On grass, he is 53-22, with 3.01.

Still, Howser said, “it’s not so much the turf, but it’ll give him a couple extra days’ rest for his back.”

John had to leave a game in Cleveland last Wednesday night with back

spasms, and he said his back was still sore. “I hope it’s all right by Friday,” he added.

He did not seem to be disturbed at having been passed over for the starting role. Neither did May, a 15-game winner with a 2.46 e.r.a.

May also has had an ailment, but he said his elbow was “900 percent better” than it was after the game he pitched Sept. 23. He last pitched on Saturday in the Yankees’ division-clinching victory over Detroit.

The 36-year-old May, who often pitched on artificial turf in his two years with Montreal, has a 15-13 record on that surface in the last three years. Guidry, in the same period, is 5-4. Guidry pitched the Yankees’ only complete game in Kansas City this season, and John was knocked out in the fourth inning of an 8-0 loss. May has pitched in Kansas City once this season, allowing no runs in three innings of relief.

If there was any surprise to Howser’s pitching plans, it was the selection of Tiant to start the fourth game. He had

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Yanks Name Guidry

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been thought to be leaning to a fourth left-hander, Tom Underwood. But, Howser explained, "if I start Underwood, I don't have a left-hander for the bull pen, and I want a left-hander in the bull pen."

If the playoff reaches the fifth and final game, Howser said Guidry would be the starter, even though he would have had only three days' rest instead of the usual four. "All we'd expect would be four, five or six innings," the manager said.

Howser will watch the way Nettles plays because he does not want the third baseman to overdo it. Results of the latest tests showed that Nettles's enzyme level has continued to improve. He was out from July 23 to last Saturday because of hepatitis.

Frey has some players to watch, too, including Darrell Porter, the catcher, and Willie Aikens, the first baseman.

Porter has been platooning with John Wathan (.305), and the right-handed Wathan could wind up playing against all the Yankee left-handers. Porter failed to get a hit in 17 times at bat at Royals Stadium in September and was 1 for 7 in the October games. In all games everywhere in September and October he has collected only six hits in 62 times up, an .097 average.

Aikens has been the regular first baseman and finished the season batting .278, hitting 20 homers and driving in 98 runs, second only to George Brett's 118. However, his production

against left-handers has left Frey wondering what to do at first base. Against left-handed pitchers, Aikens batted .199, hit six homers and knocked in 24 runs. Against right-handers, the left-handed Aikens batted .323, with 14 homers and 74 r.b.i.'s.

Brett also has hit better against right-handers (.437, 16 homers, 83 r.b.i.) than left-handers (.318, 8, 35), but he can obviously hit any kind of pitching. So can Willie Wilson, but the switch-hitter has been much more potent against left-handers (.361) than right-handers (.304). However, he has stolen more successfully against right-handers (59 of 63) than against left-handers (20 of 26).